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**Title:**

Speech to the Adelaide Convention Bureau

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SPEECH BY PREMIER DUNSTAN TO THE ADELAIDE CONVENTION BUREAU ON  
TUESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 1976.

Mr. Sharman, Mr. Kearney, Mr. O'Sullivan, Ladies and Gentlemen:  
I think for many of you coming to a convention on how to organise conventions, is somewhat of a busman's holiday; but this time you have the advantage of being able to plan the perfect gathering without having to worry too much about unpredictable factors such as delegates.

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to this seminar which has been organised by the Adelaide Convention Bureau, because it gives me the opportunity to stress the importance which the South Australian Government places on attracting conventions to Adelaide.

I am also pleased to be talking to the first seminar which the Bureau has arranged for both the travel and accommodation industries and the associations which organise the conventions.

The development of close co-operation and understanding between these two mutually dependent groups is essential. Unless both sides to a convention can firstly see, and secondly understand, the problems of their opposite numbers, then the full potential of a convention cannot be realised. Often much that could be done is left simply because the amount of common ground is limited.

The theme for this seminar makes it clear that successful conventions don't just happen by chance or luck: partnership at all levels of the industries and sponsoring organisations is the essence of success.

In Adelaide that partnership extends from the Convention Bureau, which has made our travel industry more convention-conscious. As a result of the prodding and co-ordinating which the Bureau has done, Adelaide has built up an impressive standard of expertise and service in convention planning and staging.

The Convention Bureau has proven its worth many times, and I'm sure it has demonstrated its value to individual companies and organisations many times over. But it has had a very good effect on the State's economy as well.

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The feasibility study which led to the Bureau being set up showed that in 1971 conventions were worth just on \$1 M. to Adelaide. We have boosted that to more than \$6 M. in the financial year, 1975-76, and conventions are now a rapidly growing sector of the State's tourist economy. In the last year, 167 conventions were held in Adelaide, an increase of 17 per cent over the previous year, and of those, three were International conventions and 147 were National gatherings (which included many International Delegates). That growth has not only provided the impetus for development but has also helped many areas of Adelaide's accommodation industry cushion the impact of the downturn in domestic travel generally.

The effect of our efforts in bringing conventions here has been that Adelaide's share of the Australian convention market has jumped from 7 per cent in 1971 to 17 per cent last financial year. Adelaide has established itself as a most attractive convention venue, and this success will generate further conventions.

The importance of a convention delegate to the tourist industry is that he or she will generate a higher income than an ordinary visitor. The convention delegate tends to stay longer and spend more - around \$55 a day in fact, not including transport costs. Moreover, convention delegates often enjoy our city and surrounding countryside so much that they return with their families, generating further tourist income.

There are, of course, benefits from the convention which are not purely economic. Standards of tourist facilities rise as the result of regular conventions bringing higher educated and higher income groups to an area, and the whole State benefits by keeping in the mainstream of a very wide range of subjects discussed at conventions.

If we look at the conventions held in Adelaide in the past six months, the list of professional groups spreads from insurance loss assessors to psychiatrists. These diverse occasions have helped South Australian members of the respective professions to gain from the exchange of ideas and techniques presented at conventions. These benefits have come from the Government investing in the Adelaide Convention Bureau, and by working in partnership with

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the local travel and accommodation industry. This year we are contributing half of the Bureau's costs - \$24,000 - with the remaining half being financed by Bureau members.

By actively involving ourselves with tourist development, particularly in specialised sectors such as the convention trade, the Government has been able to support local infrastructure and expertise, and at the same time plan the future growth of tourist and convention facilities.

The main project at the moment is the development of the International Hotel site in Victoria Square, and when that is finalised, as it will be, Adelaide will be still better placed to boost its share of the convention market.

An International-standard hotel complex is essential for tourism to develop in a way which will attract conventions throughout the year, and this will in turn provide a more even pattern of accommodation use. The low occupancy rates of the mid-May to mid-August period would be lifted by a better distribution of conventions throughout the year, and a first class International hotel will be a major factor in bringing that about.

Adelaide is a natural convention centre: it's both large enough and small enough to be an enjoyable city. Large enough to be able to support a broadly based service sector with a range of restaurants, theatres, cinemas and other recreational and leisure facilities, but small enough to move around easily and comfortably.

Not only Adelaide itself is accessible of course, but our wine producing areas to the North and South are close and well established as tourist attractions in themselves.

South Australia is also the Festival State - the Festival of Arts, wine and beer festivals, ethnic festivals and the other specialist festivals all add to the feeling of a State which is cosmopolitan, congenial and vital. Adelaide has a life-style which combines a comfortable climate, a diverse cultural and economic heritage and sophisticated mode of living. The result is a city which is renowned as the centre of artistic and social innovation and that reputation and style is a major part of our tourist appeal.

People want to come here for conventions, and the local industry must raise its standards of capability and capacity to meet the demand.

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The Government will work with the tourist industry to continue South Australia's leadership of domestic tourism and to strive to attract a much greater percentage of International tourists. Seminars such as this - stressing the benefits of co-operation in convention planning - will help South Australia in that task.

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